

RECENT TRIP TO CUBA BY ILLINOIS GOVERNOR GEORGE RYAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words, just a few, about Mr. Ryan, the Governor of Illinois, and his recent 5-day propaganda junket to Cuba.

I know that Mr. Ryan was motivated by large business interests which hope to profit from deals with the Cuban dictatorship, but that does not excuse his conduct.

Mr. Ryan displayed a pathetic lack of sensitivity and common sense that history will record as constituting a great disservice to the freedom loving people of Illinois.

For example, Mr. Ryan knows that there is a system of medical as well as of tourism apartheid in Cuba. He was specifically made aware of the case of a 2-year-old Cuban child, Christian Prieto, who fell from the second story of a building some months ago and was denied medical treatment at the CIMEQ hospital in Havana, a hospital with the necessary facilities to treat the child's severe neurological injuries, because the child is Cuban and his parents are not tourists with dollars or high ranking officials of the Cuban dictatorship. Only they have access to the CIMEQ, tourists with dollars or members of the regime's hierarchy.

Yet, after bringing up the case of this 2-year-old Cuban child, Mr. Ryan just accepted the hysterical explanations of the case brought forth by Castro.

Mr. Ryan refused to acknowledge the medical and tourism apartheid that the Cuban people have to suffer. In fact, Mr. Ryan demonstrated cold-hearted cynicism when, after referring to hospitals that he visited in Cuba as not meeting conditions that would make them certifiable anywhere in the United States, and knowing that Cubans are denied adequate medical care in that country because it is only available to tourists with dollars and the family of high government officials, Mr. Ryan nonetheless referred to Castro's health care system as an inspirational model for the entire Western Hemisphere.

Mr. Ryan demonstrated another trait, cowardice, when he delivered a speech at the University of Havana. His written prepared remarks included various eloquent quotes from Abraham Lincoln about human dignity and freedom. The Cuban dictator, however, unexpectedly showed up to listen to the speech and sat in the front row. Ryan then proceeded to omit the calls for human rights. But, oh, yes, he did reiterate his brave call in front of Castro for an end to the cruel U.S. embargo on the Castro regime.

Notice how Castro refers himself now to the Ryan speech. Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues want to learn the truth with regard to anything that Castro says, look for the opposite of what he says.

So what does Castro say now about Ryan? "Governor Ryan is a man of firm character, a man of frankness." Castro says that Ryan "gave a great speech, it is nothing like the speeches we are used to hearing, it was without arrogance or superiority, he said rational things, and he was greatly applauded."

Mr. Speaker, I think it is shameful that an elected official from the United States of America be held in such high regard by this hemisphere's last decrepit dictator.

Nevertheless, despite what Castro now says of Ryan, the Cuban dictator did not fail to embarrass Ryan while the Governor was in Cuba. When Ryan gave Castro a letter asking for the release of Cuba's four best known political prisoners, Castro publicly joked that he would put the letter in the same stack with the hundreds of other letters that he has received asking for the release of those four dissidents.

Castro ridiculed Ryan, but Ryan simply responded by continuing to ridicule himself, repeatedly calling for the number one foreign policy and economic objective of the Cuban dictator, the unilateral lifting of U.S. sanctions with absolutely no conditions, no call for the release of political prisoners in exchange for lifting sanctions, no call for the legalization of political parties or labor unions or the press, there was no call for free elections in exchange for lifting U.S. sanctions from Mr. Ryan.

No, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what business deal Ryan is seeking from Castro for himself or for a family member, but have no doubt that seeking a business deal for himself or a family member he is.

Also have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that, when the Cuban people are free, they will refer Mr. Ryan to make certain that his Cuban business dreams remain unfulfilled.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

TRIBUTE TO WALTER PAYTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BLAGOJEVICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, as a native Chicagoan and a pro football fan and a devoted and lifelong Chicago Bears fan, I rise today to pay tribute to Walter Payton, who died Monday at the age of 45.

Different sports heroes define different generations. For my generation, Walter Payton was the Chicago Bears.

Walter Payton will long be remembered, Mr. Speaker, as a player who rewrote football's record books. He is the National Football League's all-time leading rusher. He ran the ball more times than anybody else in history. On a day in November, in 1977, against the Minnesota Vikings, he set the record for the most yards in a single game, rushing for an amazing 275 yards.

But though these records of achievement on the football field endure, the history of Walter Payton that will be written in books will never compete with the history written deep in the hearts of his fans, for Walter Payton's records are merely the product of his remarkable character and drive.

Walter Payton made football history because of his will and his legendary determination. During his 13 seasons for the Chicago Bears, he missed only one football game, in his rookie year, because of a twisted ankle. In that game, he said he could have played, but his coaches kept him on the sidelines. This is remarkable considering the position he played and the punishment running backs in the NFL must withstand.

Mike Ditka, his former coach with the Chicago Bears, was fond of talking about Payton's unique style of running. There were bigger, faster, and more elusive runners, but Payton was the best running back he ever saw. Payton attacked would-be tacklers, he never ran out of bounds, and was always reaching for the extra yard.

This way of running the ball made him a natural for fans in a city like Chicago that prides itself on its work ethic. As Don Pierson wrote in yesterday's Chicago Tribune, "He captured the soul of a city with work habits and results that made steelworkers and ditchdiggers proud."

But the special thing about Walter Payton was not the 16,726 rushing yards he accumulated in his career. It is the way he lived his life and the kind of person he was. Several of Walter's teammates have, since his passing, talked about Walter Payton's favorite saying, "tomorrow is promised to no one". He played football that way. The way he played was a metaphor for the way he lived, with energy and with enthusiasm. Payton's style of running was aggressive and punishing. He blended a no-holds-barred style with the agility of a ballet dancer.

One Chicago sportswriter said his style was a "combination soul train and freight train." But the name sweetness was not based solely on his style of play. It was based on his personality.

He had an infectious smile and warmth that reached out through the television sets. As a fan, one just knew that here was a guy who was as likable a person as he was a player. That is why, I believe, the people of Chicago were so touched, first by his illness and then by his passing.

When Walter announced his illness, when Chicago saw a man who was so